The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such general information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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SCRANTON BUILDERS ACCEPT UNION SHOP

Scranton, Pa., April 1.—The Builders' Exchange has discarded its non-union shop theory and joined the union shop ranks.

For a quarter of a century this contractors' organization favored the "free and independent workman," but it now realizes "there ain't no such animal" in the local building industry, and that the Builders' Exchange would be forced to disband if it did not change front.

In announcing the new policy, President William Connell declared that the non-unionism—he calls it "the open shop"—but acknowledged that self preservation and continuance of their identity as contractors have been the forces that have moved the exchange men to switch their pledges.

He bemoaned that union labor has become so firmly grounded in Scranton that it is almost an impossibility for a contractor aligned with the exchange to obtain a contract.

"We will simply give the people what they want," declared the philosophic Mr. Williams, who was threatened with business ruin if he and his colleagues persisted in looking backward.

COLORADO LAW DISCUSSED.

Chicago, April 1.—In the March 21 issue of the Tailor, official magazine of the International Journeymen Tailors' union, Organizer Biggs of that organization makes Chairman McLaughlin, of the Colorado state industrial commission with attempting to have Denver journeymen tailors accept the non-union shop.

Under the Colorado law workers cannot be fined but they give 30 days' notice to the commission. After the tailors gave this notice it was several months before the commission indorsed their demands, which were later accepted by most of the larger employers.

Tailors have been conducting a merited agitation against the law, and even though they have secured better working conditions they give credit to none but their organization.

In recounting the forces that controlled them, Organizer Biggs writes:

Recently the chairman of the commission had been around in some of our shops interviewing the members of our unions, and asked them, 'which would you rather have, recognition of the union or more money?'

That was an attempt to undermine the loyalty of our members, but even in legislative halls are offered money to vote against their principles it is called bribery. McLaughlin, chairman of the commission, is for the non-union shop. We told him that to his face. Also that he himself did not respect the law he had sworn to honestly administer. This bosses' man tried several times to get us to submit the union shop to arbitration. We always declined. We know now what would have happened if we had been so foolish as to trust so sacred a thing in his hands."

"CLOSE THE GATES."

Chicago, April 1.—The Tribune expresses this editorial opinion on immigration restriction:

"The part of common sense and common caution we have to take in this matter for a time. All thinking Americans have become conscious in recent years that the process of Americanization has grown slower and more superficial than we have flattered ourselves it was. The amount of foreign nationality left in assimilated immigration, is disquietingly if not alarmingly large. It is time to prevent more national crystallization from being further diluted.

"The Tribune believes the absolute restriction of immigration would check the consequences of a reaction after the war and that a widespread industrial crisis would protect our own wage earners from the competition of cheap labor, injure our wage and the American standard of living, and thereby stimulate the home market and bring about the broadest prosperity."

CIGARMAKERS LOCKED OUT.

Lancaster, Pa., April 1.—Non-union cigarmakers, employed by Eisenhor Bros., manufacturers of the "Tom Keene" cigar, have been locked out because they demanded a change in working conditions. A committee representing the strikers appeared before the Central Labor Union and asked the organized workers to assist them. They stated that they have been working under what is known as the wrapper selecting system, a half sized leaf of the wrapper tobacco being counted into pads supposed to contain 100 each. These so-called pads were given to the cigar makers with a threat that they must make 100 cigars from each pad or be discharged. It was charged that in an average the best workman could not but 90 wrappers from the amount allowed.

EIGHT-HOUR MASS MEETING.

Cincinnati, April 1.—At a large mass meeting, trade unionists and sympathizers pledged their support to the nearly 2,500 machinists who have been on strike since last October for an eight-hour day and better working conditions. A. F. of L. Vice President O'Connell made the principal address. The resolutions denounced the "Citizens' Alliance" and its agitation secured at this meeting to recommend to all trade unionists working the eight-hour day that they refuse this meeting as a stepping stone to the road of progress and shorter hours, to the end that "Cincinnati may again enjoy the distinction of being an eight-hour city in all trades and occupations."

BAKERS ADVANCE.

Chicago, April 1.—Continued gains sums up the report of organizers of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International union at their executive board meeting at this city. The workers have been confronted by powerful combinations of capital, which have trustified this industry in many sections.

The union is now making a greater effort than ever to thoroughly organize this industry and earnestly requests the continued co-operation of the entire trade union movement.

STAGE EMPLOYES LOCKED OUT.

Wilmington, N. C., April 1.—The Howard & Wells Amusement company has secured a staff of non-union factory and moving picture houses in this city and has locked out its employes who are members of the Stage Employes' union. This local was organized last year.

LABORERS INCREASE WAGES.

Schenectady, N. Y., April 1.—The newly organized laborers' union, affiliated to the American Federation of Labor, has raised wages 25 cents a day.

OCCUPATIONAL ILLS CAUSE HEAVY LOSS

Westerville, Ohio, April 1.—Deaths from preventable causes among the working men alone in this country total 250,000 yearly, according to Dr. E. R. Hayhurst, who spoke at the state health exhibit at this place. He is a specialist on this subject, and investigates occupational diseases for the board of health and the state industrial commission.

Dr. Hayhurst defined "occupational disease" as "ill-health resulting from work. Ordinarily, work should make good health and lengthen life, but work under bad conditions, or in the wrong way, or when exposed to poisons has the opposite effect.

He emphasized the point that more than half of the people who work for wages or salary lose their lives from causes which may and should be prevented—enumerating as the chief factors, tuberculosis, pneumonia, typhoid fever, accidents and poisoning. There are 2,000,000 cases of industrial illness annually.

Dr. Hayhurst enumerated as the chief causes of occupational diseases: Dust, continual breathing of which leads to tuberculosis, pneumonia and like diseases, causes eczema and sore eyes, and which could be controlled in work places by change of methods, installation of vent pipes, wet sweeping and the like; dirt and disorder, which breed uncleanliness, depression and immorality; improper illumination, which produces a certain amount of headache; our lack, the true cause of which is generally never suspected—bad air, which usually is locally labeled "draft," "cold," "damp" and too dead or motionless, and sometimes also loaded with dust, smoke, fumes, gases or odors; exposure to high temperature, which causes early old age and which can be made factories is no longer a risk; cold, where the worker is not properly clothed, or works in damp air; poisons found in work places; fatigue of body, hands or eyes, which is the most common cause of occupational diseases, and "industrial," on the other hand, where the worker sits steadily at a machine or a desk, both of which are dangerous from the viewpoint of over or under-exercise.

ACCIDENTS CAUSE DEPENDENCY.

Portland, Ore., April 1.—Industrial accidents and preventable diseases outnumber all causes of dependency, in our big, says the mothers' pension board, in a report just published.

"Proper safeguarding by the different industries," continues the report, "would have prevented a number of these families from becoming dependent on the community, and the enactment of new laws for the protection of the old by the state would have prevented a number of industries from wastefully using the human element in developing the wreck aside as remorselessly as though it were inanimate machinery, young men, for example, are sent each an illustration as that of the United States Steel Corporation, which is the piece of mechanism, which has made a successful venture in foreign commerce, which place in future days of peace is a certainty not approached by any domestic organization, and which has utterly crushed democracy in every land, where it controls.

"If the United States should go in for close organization for purposes of material grandeur the thing we should get would be nothing but the great corporation. We would all be pensioners of an enlightened industrial aristocracy."

CZAR LIKE "MOVIE" CENSORS.

Philadelphia, April 1.—The state board of moving picture censors has rendered an appeal for liberty of the screen to be exhibited. The law creating the censor board is now being reviewed by the supreme court and a film concern prepared the following for exhibition:

"Political censorship of moving pictures is becoming so serious that it threatens to ruin the whole industry. If you believe in the freedom of the screen just as you believe in the freedom of the press, you must write to your congressman, representative and mayor and demand a free screen?"

While there is nothing "immoral" or "sacrilegious" about the appeal, the censors arbitrarily refused to allow it to be shown.

PAPER MAKERS REDUCE HOURS.

Kalamazoo, Mich., April 1.—Reports to Vice President Smith of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers show that 18 of the largest paper mills in Michigan and Ohio have adopted the eight-hour day without a wage reduction. The former workday has been 12 hours and these workers have continued agitating despite victimization in mill managements. The reductions will effect about 5,000 men employed at Otsego, Watervelet, Kalamazoo and Vicksburg, Mich., and Dayton, West Carrollton and Miamisburg, Ohio.

FACTORY FIRE ESCAPES

Albany, N. Y., April 1.—The state industrial commission has adopted a rule which requires that all factory buildings from two to five stories in height, in which 25 or more persons are employed above the second floor, shall have fireproof enclosed stairways on the side extending from the sidewalk, except where the contents are absolutely noncombustible and there are automatic sprinklers on each floor.

MACHINISTS RAISE WAGES

Massillon, Ohio, April 1.—Machinists employed by the Massillon Steel Castings have won their strike. Wages are increased from 3 to 5 cents an hour, with time and one-half for overtime. The latter, together with the nine-hour day, will take effect June 1.

TANNERS RAISE WAGES.

Grand Haven, Mich., April 1.—After a short strike, employes of the Eagle-Ottawa Tannery company have secured wage increases from $1.50 to $2.30 a week. They were assisted by President Wahl and Secretary Drake of the Michigan state federation of labor.

HOUSE WRECKERS GAIN.

New York, April 1.—After a two weeks' strike the House Wrecking union has raised wages 7 cents an hour, secured union recognition and a Saturday half holiday with no wage reduction. About 400 workers are benefited. They are employed in demolishing old houses.

RICHMOND LABOR FORWARD.

Richmond, Va., April 1.—The Central Trades and Labor Council has appointed a committee to conduct a labor forward campaign during the next two months. International unions will be requested to send representatives to assist.

World's Trade Unionists Invited to Labor Peace Congress

Washington, April 1.—President Gompers has issued an invitation to trade union centers throughout the world to send representatives to a labor's world peace congress to be held at the same time and in the same city as the representatives from the different countries shall meet to determine the terms of peace at the close of the present war. The A. F. of L. convention, held November, 1914, four months after the war began, adopted resolutions indorsing this plan. At the A. F. of L. convention, last year, detailed plans were approved, although President Gompers suggests that this plan "is necessarily flexible and broad."

The letter has been translated in French, German and Spanish, and is forwarded under authority of the A. F. of L. executive council.

"Presidential primaries assures the world's organized workers that the American Federation of Labor does not offer any plan or license as to what the movements of the congress shall do, and that its sole interest is to organize this world's congress of labor that democracy's ideals may be included in the terms of peace. He says, in part:

"The proposal to hold a labor congress was generally discussed by the various national labor organizations during the past year and some of them have officially approved the plan.

"In other countries thought is concentrated on the immediate and compelling problems of daily life—problems so urgent that all else must wait upon the future. We appreciate the intense strain with which our fellow workers of Europe await the outcome of the day's struggle on the battlefield and the ultimate decision of the war.

"Everywhere the wage earners by service have proved their loyalty to country, to home, their patriotism, their value as men and women. In the past they have borne not only the burdens of fighting during the war, but have been weighted down by the war debts and the centuries they have made progress. It has been a long fight from slavery to the present degree of freedom.

"There is great opportunity in the immediate future for democracy and freedom. A century ago the feudal system in the Napoleonic wars that convulsed Europe and the Third Estate established their right to freedom and participation in the affairs of government and society.

"Slowly but surely the workers have been making demands for recognition of their rights as human beings and as members of society and have established many of them.

"In appreciation of their dignity and value, it is the duty of the wage earners of the world to consider the world assembled in the next world congress that nothing touching the lives or the workers shall be determined without taking counsel with them. Such a demand made by the personal representatives of the wage earners assembled in the same place and at the same time as the representatives of the world have a tremendous effect upon the spirit and the determinations of that congress.

"Surely the world will set high standards of democracy and would give prominence to principles of human welfare that could not be ignored.

"The labor movement is the great humanizing, democratizing force in the world. Therefore, it must have a place wherever the welfare of the wage earners is concerned."

DEMOCRACY VS. EFFICIENCY

San Francisco, April 1.—Can a democracy, with its millions of men and women who struggle for liberty and freedom to govern themselves, an efficient, rigid, autocratic business institution like the United States Steel corporation?

The Bulletin of this city thinks not, and gives the following reasons:

"The proposal to hold a labor congress was generally discussed by the various national labor organizations during the

UNION LABEL

HATTERS' RELIEF FUND.

Washington, April 1.—Up to and including Wednesday, March 29, A. F. of L. Secretary Frank Morrison has received $111,821.50 for the benefit of the Danbury hatters. This money represents the payment of one hour's labor on January 27 by the unionists contributing.

BONUS SYSTEMS DISCARDED

Washington, April 1.—The recently-organized Street Car Men's union raised wages, shortened hours and conditions employed by the two companies in this city, after a short strike. When the strike was inaugurated the companies maintained a bonus system.

These workers were discontented, however, and began to agitate. They scoffed at bonus systems and objected to low wages and long hours. After the strike was called and settled and the men secured wage increases and eight hours' continuous work, the companies are dismayed at this exhibition of ingratitude and announce that the bonus systems will be discontinued.

In reply the men have published the following comparison of last year's bonus and wage increases under union conditions, which makes the companies' welfare plans look like the proverbial "thirty cents":

CAPITAL TRACTION CO.

	Bonus.	Wage Inc.
First year	$0.00	$0.00
Second year	32.00	42.00
Third year	64.00	62.40
Fourth year	96.00	62.40
Fifth year	72.00	62.40
Sixth year	72.00	93.60
Seventh year	72.00	124.80
Eighth year	72.00	124.80
Ninth year	72.00	124.80
Tenth year	72.00	124.80

WASHINGTON RAILWAY AND ELECTRIC CO.

	Bonus.	Wage Inc.
All employes	$25.17	62.40

NEW VIRGINIA LABOR LAWS.

Richmond, Va., April 1.—The Virginia legislature, which has just adjourned, abolished the contract convict labor system and a 20 years' fight by organized labor in this state is at an end. Hereafter convicts will be worked on the public roads and state farms.

Laws providing for fire escapes on factories have been strengthened, and sanitary washrooms and toilets inside of all workers' shops provided for.

Private employment agencies are placed under control of the state labor department and many evil practices of these concerns are broken up.

City councils may hereafter pension their fire department firemen.

Counties and states are empowered to establish sanitoria for the care of tuberculosis patients.

Commission appointed to collect printing for the legislature believe this will provide information on which to base claim for a state printing plant to make public school text books.

WOMEN MUST HAVE DAY OFF.

Harrisburg, Pa., April 1.—The industrial board of the state department of labor has refused the request of hotel and restaurant keepers in Pennsylvania asking more than 10 women to exempt them from the law which provides for a day of rest one day of each week for these employes.

The industrial board included this tart statement in its refusal:

"Most of them (institutions) are supposed to be doing a service to humanity, many are maintained by state aid and private charitable funds. And in the management of these funds they are supposed to seek the greatest good of all, including their employes.

"The refusal with funds for beneficient and religious work, they should so co-operate these funds as to benefit all concerned with their operations, and because of the high idealism in the founding of such institutions they should be the foremost to establish fine labor relations.

"State institutions, especially, should lead in observing state laws."

OTIS' SLANDERS ARE COSTLY.

Los Angeles, Cal., April 1.—Harrison Gray Otis and the Los Angeles Times may slander the trade union movement and its members with impunity, but the gallant general is beginning to learn that these campaigns are costly, when practiced on other folks, since a jury has just awarded Judge Conley $5,000 damages in his suit for libel. This is the third time Attorney Scott has started to manage suit against Otis, and in each instance he has been successful. The three awards total $66,500.

APPROVES STATE COSSACKS.

Albany, N. Y., April 1.—Major General Leonard Wood has written to the state police committee of the state legislature that the organization of a state police force has raised wages 7 cents an hour, secured union recognition and a Saturday half holiday with no wage reduction. About 400 workers are benefited. They are employed in demolishing old houses.

RICHMOND LABOR FORWARD.

Richmond, Va., April 1.—The Central Trades and Labor Council has appointed a committee to conduct a labor forward campaign during the next two months. International unions will be requested to send representatives to assist.

TRACKMEN RETURN TO WORK.

Carbondale, Pa., April 1.—Trackmen and other unskilled laborers employed by the Delaware & Western railroad have secured wage increases as the result of a strike. About 90 men are benefited.

MUST CHECK IMMIGRATION

Milwaukee, Wis., April 1.—"The situation which formerly brought aliens to this country in quest of religious and political freedom has disappeared, and the flow of immigrants has become chiefly a purely economic phenomenon," declared Prof. E. A. Ross, of Madison, Wisconsin, in a speech in this city. He said that the influence of immigrants without their families and return after they have enjoyed for a time the high standard of American labor market are continually increasing.

"The great influx of immigrants from southern Europe, with their standards of lower living than those who formerly constituted the bulk of immigrants to this country, has come to mean a racial, trial, social and political problems, particularly in American cities," continued Prof. Ross. "The influence of immigrants, as a whole, in recent years, has been to delay the advance toward the better standard of life, and in politics has given the bosses an opportunity to intrench. Whatever it may have been in the past, immigration has proved to be a problem affecting the very soul and perpetuity of the American people. No other problem before us compares with this problem.

"At the beginning of the century, immigrants have been coming at the average rate of 1,000,000 a year, and at least 10,000,000 of them have remained. The sources of immigration have greatly changed in the course of 25 years. Normerly the bulk of the immigrants that came from the British, Scandinavian and Germanic countries possessed much the same background and training, blended readily with one another and with the native Americans.

"The immigrants that now flock eastward until Constantinople has been about the center of the field supplying immigrants. This is the stream that is swelling immigration are by numerical restriction, or by the literacy test. The literacy test is one that can be applied by the immigrant himself before he sells out and transports his family to this country."

R. R. CHIEFS MAKE STATEMENT.

Chicago, Ill., April 1.—The four chief executives of the brotherhoods of conductors, firemen, engineers and trainmen have authorized the following self-explanatory statement relative to the referendum strike vote of railway transportation employes:

"While the returns from the membership of these four organizations are not in, it is evident that the vote is overwhelmingly in favor of presenting to the railway companies of the United States the request for the eight-hour day and time and one-half for overtime. Consequently, the movement with that object in view will be carried forward along the same lines. The present vote has no significance whatever except as an indication of the desire of the men. At this matter should be pressed to a conclusion, and all reports that have been published believe will prove to be erroneous and misleading. In the immediate future the request will be presented to the railway managements and the necessary steps taken to make the same effective."

BUSINESS MEN GIVE "ADVICE."

Scranton, Pa., April 1.—Miners are not impressed with pleas of business men in the anthracite region that coal operators and their employes sign joint wage contracts. Reports from New York indicate that delegations of business men will visit Washington next week to urge that contracts on the ground that scale renewals "disturb business." To this came the reply: "If these merchants will agree to go back to the 1912 prices for their goods and guarantee not to increase the price for 10 years, we will drop our demand for advanced wages and make a 10-year agreement."

OPPOSE SUNDAY BARBER SHOPS.

Albany, N. Y., April 1.—A bill has been introduced in the state legislature providing for a penalty of not less than $5 for the first offense for opening barber shops on Sunday. The second offense provides a fine of not more than $25. The amendment would increase the minimum fine for second offense from $10 to $15 or a minimum imprisonment of 25 days. The exceptions to the law in force at present would remain. Saratoga Springs and New York are stricken out.

CAUSES OF INDIGESTION.

Boston, April 1.—In a talk on "Chronic Indigestion" before the Harvard medical school, Dr. F. W. White said that worry, fatigue, overwork, and doing things too fast, causes one form of indigestion.

"Many times, if we take a person who has what he calls 'chronic indigestion,' we find no real evidence of any disease, but only some of these things I caused by this habit of rushing about and overworking," he said.

CITY FIREMEN UNITE.

Portsmouth, Ohio, April 1.—City firemen have organized a federal union and affiliated with the Central Labor Union. Unions of carpenters and horseshoers have also been organized.

WANT TWO-PLATOON SYSTEM.

Duluth, Minn., April 1.—Municipal firemen have submitted nearly 5,000 names to a petition for a two-platoon system ordinance.

RUBBER STAMP JURIES DENOUNCED BY JUDGE

New York, April 1.—"Any grand juror who acts as a rubber stamp for the district attorney ought to get off the panel as soon as possible," said Judge Mulqueen of the court of general sessions at a meeting of the Association of Grand Jurors. The speaker had been asked by a member of the association if it was proper for a grand juror to implicitly obey "the instructions of the prosecuting officer in the matter of indictments."

"Certainly not," replied the judge. "A grand juror must keep in mind that he and his associates are the judges of the facts, just as a jury is at the trial of a case. The district attorney has no business to make any suggestions as to the facts. His duty is simply to advise as to the law.

"District attorneys have no right to insist on the indictment of an accused person unless in their opinion, before the grand jury is as conclusive as would be the evidence at the trial. Don't be persuaded to indict unless the facts amply justify such action."

After the meeting Judge Mulqueen declared that frequently the courts were overcrowded because prosecuting officers influenced grand juries to indict when the chances of getting convictions were slight.

INDUSTRY'S HEAVY TOLL.

Harrisburg, Pa., April 1.—Governor Brumbaugh presided at an industrial accident prevention conference held at the state capitol. Trade union officials and employers were present. In his opening statement the governor and executive issued a warning note because of the 1,000 accidents per day, averaging more than eight fatalities per day, which are being reported.

It was agreed by the executive committee of the state federation of labor and representatives of various railroad companies that the standards already should be given all the time assigned to the workers to present their side of the question. Mr. Gompers, in an address to the conference that labor and capital were both striving for the same thing, but called attention to the fact that all reforms and betterments of working conditions which have been secured by society and by capital, have been wrung from them only by the stern demands of organized labor, reinforced by the fear that labor would arm if it has.

President Truesdale of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western railroad insisted that the main trouble is "with the employe who fails, for this or that reason, to be careful always." President Gompers admitted carelessness among workmen, but declared that the chief cause is overwork, poor pay and poor working conditions.

It was shown that during the first two months of this year 351 workers lost their lives in Pennsylvania's shops, mills and mines. During this period 27,599 were injured.

The purpose of the conference was to devise a campaign against this destruction of human life and limb.

COURT REBUKES RAILROAD.

Fall River, Mass., April 1.—Striking railroad shopmen are being upheld in the complaint of the New Haven railroad company, which charges its men with conspiracy, alleging that in stealing everything they can buy their hands on. At the trial Judge Hanify of this district court declared that he was not acquainted with the ethics of strike-breaking. He rebuked the railroad for its methods, and ordered the case dismissed. "When men are imported here as strike-breakers, the company should see that they come with clean hands."

Later the strikers returned to work on a promise by the railroad company to state a satisfactory basis for the adjustments of the men which would be acted on within two weeks. The men struck for wage increases and a supper hour.

DISCARD TAYLOR SYSTEM.

Boston, April 1.—The Reece Buttonhole Machine company has reached an agreement with its striking employes. The so-called "efficiency" system is abandoned, the eight-hour day granted, and time and one-half for overtime. Pay will be paid for overtime and double time for Sundays and holidays. Arbitration provisions are also agreed to in the contract.

These workers are mostly machinists. They struck, but returned to work as members of Machinists' union No. 264.

RESUBMIT WAGE LAW.

Detroit, Mich., April 1.—The minimum wage amendment to the city charter has been resubmitted to the city council at the request of the Detroit federation of labor. The amendment provides for a wage of not less than $2.50 a day for unskilled labor and the highest prevailing rates for skilled mechanics. This amendment, last spring, received the largest vote ever given a charter proposal, but was recently declared invalid because legal red tape had not been complied with.

INCREASES FOR CAR MEN.

Hamilton, Ont., April 1.—The Street Car Men's union has signed a two-year contract with the local street car company which secures the following increases have been secured:

First-year men, 2 cents an hour; second-year men, 3 cents an hour, and third-year men, 3 cents an hour. The original demand was a scale of 25, 27 and 29 cents an hour. Wages paid to the men before were 20, 22 and 25 cents per hour, according to the grade.

"THINKLESS" MAN VALUELESS.

Lexington, Ky., April 1.—In an address to the local federation of labor on the value of education, Dean Frederick A. Fitz of the Kentucky university said:

"A man means a thing that thinks; a man from his neck down isn't worth 10 cents a day."

STATE INSURANCE GROWS.

Harrisburg, Pa., April 1.—The state insurance fund is growing to such an extent that large quarters must be secured. Already more than 20,000 policies have been written by the fund. These cover compensation liability of employers in every county.

PROFIT FOR WESTERN UNION.

New York, April 1.—The annual report of the Western Union Telegraph company shows a surplus of $16,689,893. The gain in operating revenues increased over 1914 by $4,367,402. It is stated that the increase is caused wholly by increased business.

STEEL INDICTMENTS QUASHED BY COURT

Youngstown, Ohio, April 1.—Judge W. S. Anderson of the common pleas court has quashed indictments against the United States Steel Corporation and five other steel companies who were charged with conspiring to regulate the price of common labor in violation of the Ohio anti-trust law.

The court ruled that the indictments were "vague, indefinite and uncertain," and that they conflicted with the Clayton amendment to the federal anti-trust law, which declares that "the labor power of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce."

It is quite probable that the court's action will permit the steel concerns to escape punishment for the loss of life and destruction of property resulting from the Youngstown riots. It may also be impossible to make public the evidence at the trial which the grand jury declared would prove that "lawless conditions of affairs surrounding the labor conditions existing in and about the steel industries of this valley," and the shameless disregard on the part of operators of the rights of the workers and the public generally.

While a trial might result in these developments it is not certain that on the theory that labor is a commodity, thereby securing another precedent to use against trade unionists in their future campaigns to abolish this ancient concept.

Because of the application of this "commodity" theory to labor courts decisions of the past 25 years, decisions which invariably deny workers inherent rights that are guaranteed by the federal and states' constitutions.

COSSACKS FOR NEW YORK

Albany, N. Y., April 1.—A state constabulary bill has been introduced in the legislature providing for a force of 500 men for the establishment of four troops of three cossacks, each containing 6 privates at a salary of $900 per year, a captain, at $1,800; a lieutenant, at $1,600; a first sergeant, at $1,200; four sergeants, at $1,000 per year, and two corporals at $900 each. These shall be in command of a superintendent, appointed by the governor, at an annual salary of $5,000. The bill appropriates $500,000 to establish this system, which is now in vogue in Pennsylvania.

A state constabulary, its advocates say, will relieve the state militia from strike duty and thereby increase enlistments in the state troops.

It is against the bill representatives of organized labor protested the measure, which was approved by many business organizations. Samuel Gompers and the state federation of labor assailed practically every feature of the bill, especially the provisions permitting members of the proposed constabulary forces to be stationed in any part of the state to arrest for attempts to commit crime. "Who is to determine whether or not a man is attempting to commit crime?" he asked.

"The word 'attempting' is dangerous in its use in this bill and should not be permitted."

SECURE 54 MINIMUM RATE.

Quincy, Mass., April 1.—The Granite Cutters' International association has secured a minimum wage rate of $4 a day for a maximum 44-hour week, after a campaign that was inaugurated last January. In 1912 these cutters notified employers that agreements effective after May 1, 1916, should provide for a minimum of $4 a day for eight of eight hours for five days of the week and four hours on Saturday. This rate is to apply to the average skilled granite cutter, but extra skill, even in the lowest paying localities, is to be paid accordingly.

To date contracts calling for the new minimum have been signed in 25 localities, and a number of others have been secured in Halifax, N. S. Strikes are on in Bethel, Cape Ann, Fitzwilliam, Keene, Milford, N. H.; Quincy, Mass. (three branches); Oklahoma City and Stony Creek, Conn. In these cases the minimum is agreed to, but suspensions of work have followed differences between employers and cutters over the length of the contract to be signed and other details.

WILL ASK CHANGES.

Harrisburg, Pa., April 1.—The executive committee of the federation of labor will propose several amendments to the workmen's compensation law at the coming session of the legislature. One amendment will fix the rate of compensation at 66 2-3 per cent of the weekly wage instead of 50 per cent, and increase the minimum payment to $6 and the maximum to $20. Payments must begins now 14 days after an accident and a proposed amendment will make it begin after the accident. An effort will be made to repeal the section exempting corporations from their own insurance. Finally an effort will be made to prevent railroads from claiming exemption on the plea that they are under interstate commerce laws.

ORGANIZING IN OMAHA

Omaha, Neb., April 1.—As a result of the labor forward movement in this city the following unions have been organized: Waitresses, milliners, office workers, operators in the pea, hat trimmers, drivers and a building trades council. The allied printing trades council has been reorganized. Since January the local has added 40 per cent; printing pressmen, 50 per cent; cedarmen, 75 per cent, and bindery and deckorators, 20 per cent of their membership. The labor forward campaign will be followed by an aggressive campaign about April 15, when it is expected to reach practically every non-union wage worker in this locality.

WANT FARMERS' HELP

Kent, Wash., April 1.—C. R. Cottrell, rural credits commissioner of the Washington state grange, has issued a letter from the Western Railway Managers' association asking for assistance in its efforts to relieve the present demand of train service employes.

The managers were informed that "the farmers of Washington state are thoroughly organized and in harmony with the purposes of the grange. The farmer of today is not permitting himself to be used as a cat's paw to pull chestnuts from any corporation fire."

BUILDERS RECOGNIZE UNIONS.

Cincinnati, April 1.—The Building Construction Employers' association has signed a two-year agreement with the Building Trades Council. Provision is made for arbitrating differences between the two parties. The agreement also provides for the elimination of strikes because of jurisdictional disputes.

STAGE EMPLOYES GAIN.

Danbury, Conn., April 1.—The wage increase demanded by the Theatrical Stage Employes' union has been granted.